

CONFIDENTIAL

Lebanon

CONFIDENTIAL

DESKBY 251000Z FCO

FM BEIRUT 250655Z JAN 83

TO IMMEDIATE F.C.O.

TELEGRAM NUMBER 32 OF 25 JANUARY 1983

AND TO IMMEDIATE MODUK

INFO IMMEDIATE CBFC, TEL AVIV, WASHINGTON

ROUTINE CAIRO, DAMASCUS, AMMAN

SAVING UKMIS NEW YORK, PARIS, ROME, JEDDA.

YOUR TELEGRAM NO 22 OF 19 JANUARY (NOT TO ALL):

MNF/HYPERION.

1. DRAPER ASKED ME TO CALL ON 24 JANUARY. HE HAD COME BACK EARLY FROM KHALDE TO SEE ME.

2. ESSENTIALLY HE HAD MISGIVINGS OVER OUR BASING THE BRITISH

CONTINGENT IN THE REGIE DU TABAC AT HADATH, AS OPPOSED TO THEIR OPERATING IN AND THROUGH THE AREA. THE MARINES HAD RECENTLY HAD BRUSHES WITH THE ISRAELIS IN THE AREA. THE BRITISH POSITION WOULD LIE JUST OFF A MAIN ISRAELI SUPPLY ROUTE, THROUGH WHICH THE ISRAELIS OFTEN PUT UP TO 150 VEHICLES A DAY. THEY WERE ALSO GETTING JUMPY, OR PRETENDING TO BE, ABOUT PALESTINIAN INFILTRATION AND OPERATIONS IN THE AREA SEMI COLON AND AS A CONSEQUENCE HAD INTENSIFIED PATROLS AND WERE USING A TECHNIQUE OF 'RECONNAISSANCE BY FIRE', WHICH INVOLVED SHOOTING UP THE COUNTRY EITHER SIDE OF THE MAIN ROAD THROUGH HADATH. FINALLY, THE ISRAELIS MIGHT USE INCIDENTS WITH THE LEBANESE AND MNF TO STALL NEGOTIATIONS. HE ADDED THAT THE LEBANESE WERE SHOWING SIGNS OF BEING TOO COCKY WHEN THEY THOUGHT THE MNF WOULD BEAR THE BRUNT. THIS MIGHT HAVE BEEN THEIR MOTIVE IN STEERING US TOWARDS HADATH.

3. IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTIONS DRAPER SAID THAT HE WAS WORRIED AND FELT BOUND TO MAKE HIS MISGIVINGS CLEAR, BUT WAS NOT FORMALLY ASKING US NOT TO OCCUPY THE HADATH POSITION. I THANKED HIM AND UNDERTOOK TO REPORT: I WOULD ALSO SEND MY ASSISTANT DEFENCE ATTACHE TO CONFER WITH HIS MILITARY AIDE FORTHWITH.

4. THIS IS LATE IN THE DAY FOR THE AMERICANS TO EXPRESS THIS VIEW. I SUSPECT THAT THERE WAS NOT MUCH LIAISON BETWEEN THEIR VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS. NEVERTHELESS WE SHOULD PAY SOME ATTENTION TO THEIR VIEWS SINCE THEY ARE CARRYING THE BALL IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

5. THERE ARE 2 QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED ABOUT ANY OPERATION OF THE BRITISH CONTINGENT:

CONFIDENTIAL

/ (A)

CONFIDENTIAL

(A) IS IT MILITARILY FEASIBLE (ON WHICH THE FORCE COMMANDER MUST ADVISE ME)?

(B) IS IT POLITICALLY EXPEDIENT (ON WHICH I MUST MAKE MY OWN MIND UP, CONSULTING AS NEED BE)? SEE PARA 2 ABOVE, LAST THREE SENTENCES.

6. I THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT THE ADVANCE PARTY SHOULD COME AS PLANNED. (THEY ARE TO LODGE WITH THE AMERICANS AND CAN OBSERVE THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND 'NEXT DOOR'). WHEN THEY HAVE ANSWERED QUESTION (A) ABOVE, IF THE ANSWER IS 'YES' DRAPER AND I CAN CONSIDER QUESTION (B) QUICKLY AND I CAN CONSULT THE LEBANESE IF NECESSARY.

7. I PUT THE POINTS IN PARAGRAPH S 5 AND 6 ABOVE TO DRAPER. HE DID NOT DISSENT.

8. FCO PLEASE PASS TO ALL SAVING ADDRESSEES.

ROBERTS

REPEATED AS REQUESTED

STANDARD

NENAD
MED
NAD
SAD
UND
EESD
ECD
WED
RID

SECURITY D
MAED
ES & SD
ERD
ESID
CONS D
CONS EM UNIT
CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE

2
CONFIDENTIAL